

"VAN GOOL'S"

COLES

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Cinderella



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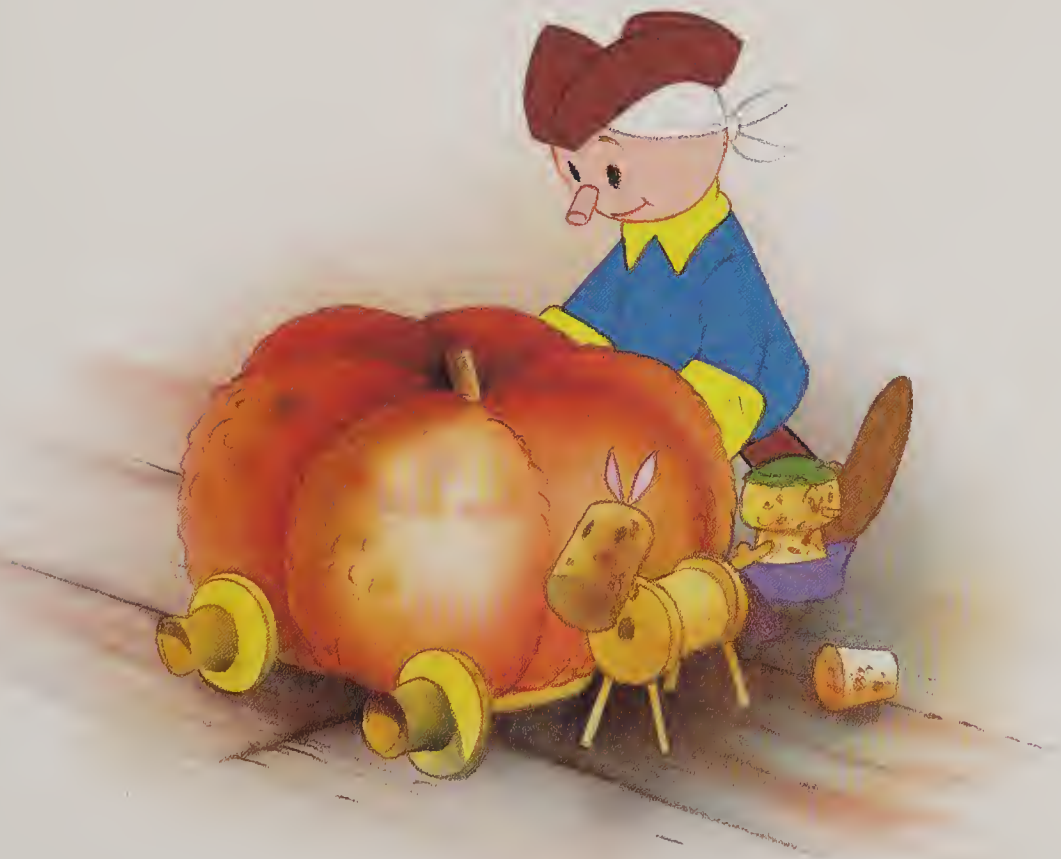
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'''VAN GOOL'S'''

Cinderella



TWIN BOOKS



Once upon a time there was a young woman who was kind and good. As she had no one to talk to, she often told her troubles to her dolls.

“Now listen carefully, and I will tell you about myself,” she said to her favorite doll. “When I was a baby I lived with my mother and father, who loved me very much. But one day my mother became very sick, and she died suddenly. After a long time my father married a woman with two daughters of her own.”



The doll knew the rest of the story. A year passed, then the girl's father also died. The poor girl's stepmother favored her own daughters, who were spiteful and jealous of their sister's beauty. They made the girl do all the housework, and she spent her days cooking, cleaning, and attending to her sisters' needs. Because she often had to work among the cinders, tending the fireplace and the stove, her cruel sisters called her Cinderella.





Cinderella worked hard at her chores from morning to night. She sometimes hummed as she worked, and her mean-hearted sisters, jealous even that she might have moments of happiness, would give her extra work.

“Cinderella, don’t forget to mend my blue dress!” snapped the older sister.

“And sew the lace collar onto my pink gown,” demanded the other.

“Ah well,” sighed Cinderella to her doll. “We shall not have time to take our walk again today.”







In their comfortable bedroom, the sisters put on their nightgowns and stretched. “What a busy and tiring day we’ve had,” they agreed. “Shopping can be such hard work!”



Cinderella retired to her own tiny room off the kitchen. Her ragged clothing did not keep her warm in the cold, shabby room. She talked to her dolls – who were her only friends – and bade them goodnight.

“Stay warm and sleep well,” she said as she climbed into bed.



The next day bells summoned the townsfolk to the square, where the King's herald read aloud a royal proclamation:

“All the young women of the kingdom are invited to a great ball at the castle tomorrow night, in honor of the Prince's birthday.”

The town buzzed with excitement. Everyone knew that the Prince would be looking among the guests for a bride.







The news threw Cinderella's household into a flurry of activity. Her sisters tried on every gown and cloak, slipper and sash, necklace and ribbon they owned. They ordered Cinderella to fetch things, and to add trim and bows to their gowns.



Cinderella finished all the work the evening of the royal ball. There had been no time to sew a dress for herself.

“You look beautiful, dears,” the sisters’ mother called after them as they climbed into the carriage.

“I shall be the most beautiful woman at the ball!” exclaimed the older one.

“No, no!” replied the younger. “I’m sure the Prince will only have eyes for *me*.”

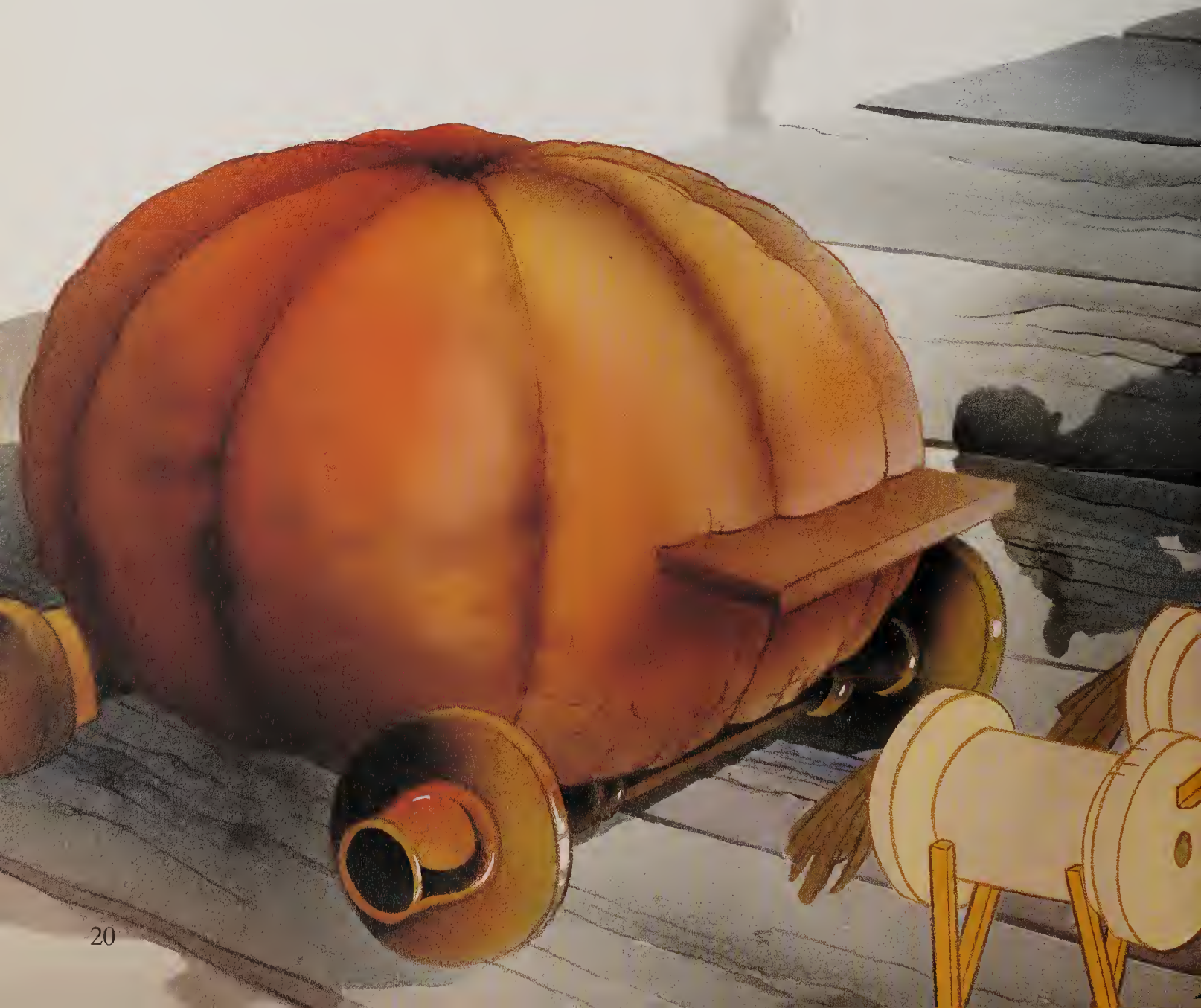


Cinderella watched sadly as the carriage sped away. How she wished she could be going to the ball as well.

Cinderella went inside and gathered together her dolls.

“Let’s pretend that *we* are going to the ball,” she told them. She took a pumpkin from the cellar and mounted it on toy wheels to make a coach. Then she turned to her spool horses and said, “Now, you will be a team of matching steeds to pull my carriage. And you,” she added, picking up one of her dolls, “will be the coachman!”

Just then, a bright golden light filled the dark kitchen, and a kindly voice spoke, “Good evening, Cinderella.”







Startled, Cinderella jumped up to see a chubby little woman in a ruffled cap holding a wand that gave off sparkles of light.

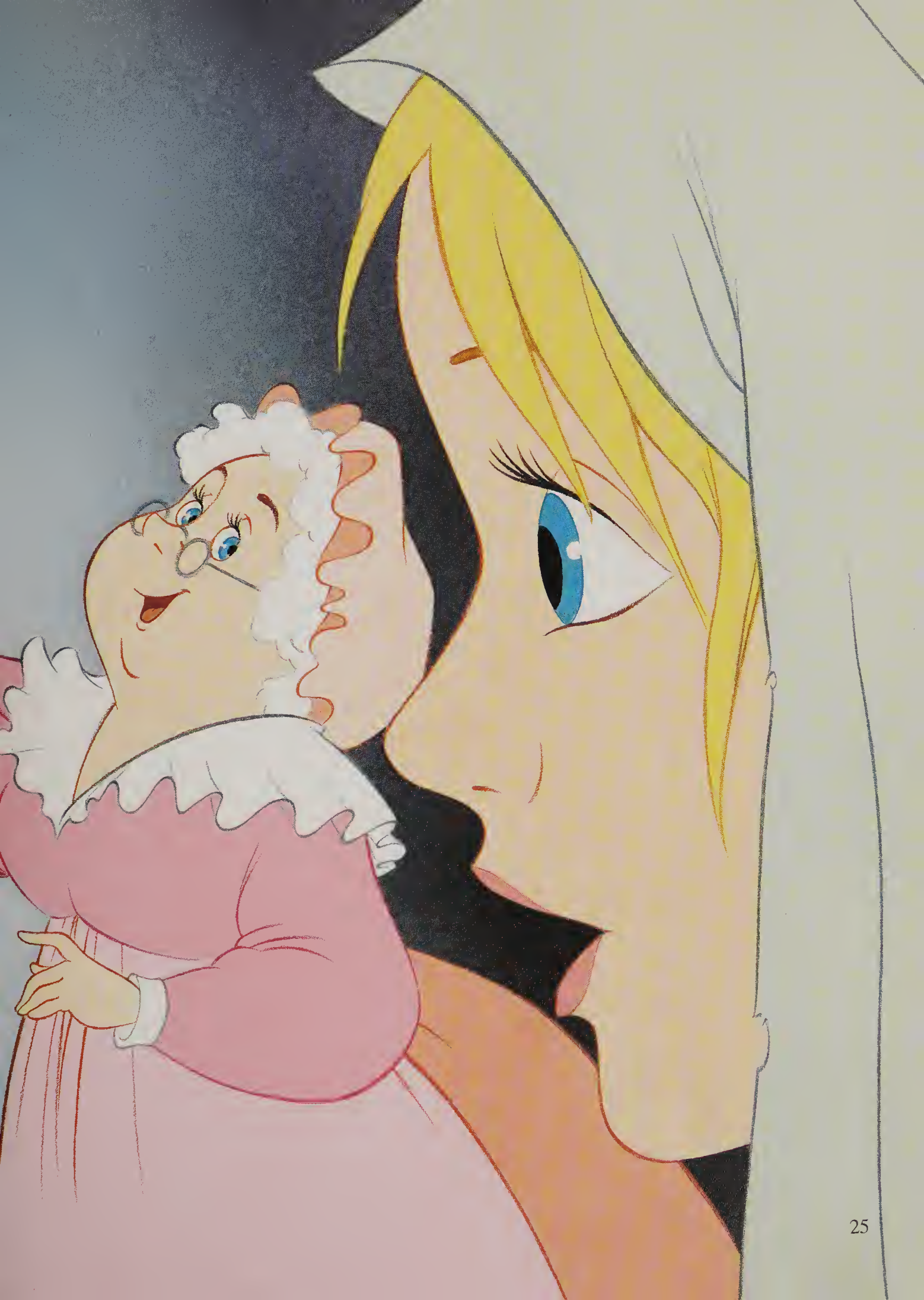
“You don’t remember your fairy godmother, do you?” asked the little woman, chuckling. “And no wonder – I haven’t seen you since you were a baby. But I’ve watched over you in all your troubles, and now I’m here to send you to the ball.” With that, she waved her magic wand, and *poof!* – the coachman doll came to life, complete with a wig and three-cornered hat!



“Oh!” said Cinderella, almost speechless with wonder. Smiling, her fairy godmother carried the pumpkin outside. Again, she waved her wand, and the pumpkin swelled up bigger and bigger, until it turned into a dazzling glass coach fit for a princess!

“And now for two footmen to ride behind and open the doors for you,” said the little woman briskly.







In a twinkling, two more of the dolls came to life and sprang onto their station behind the coach.

“Dear Godmother,” sighed Cinderella, “this is like a dream come true! But what shall I wear to the ball?” Anxiously, she looked down at her tattered dress and clumsy shoes.





“The work of but a moment!” said the fairy godmother, pointing her wand at the girl. Cinderella suddenly found herself robed in the softest velvet, trimmed with the finest linen and seed pearls. Delicate glass slippers sparkled on her dainty feet.

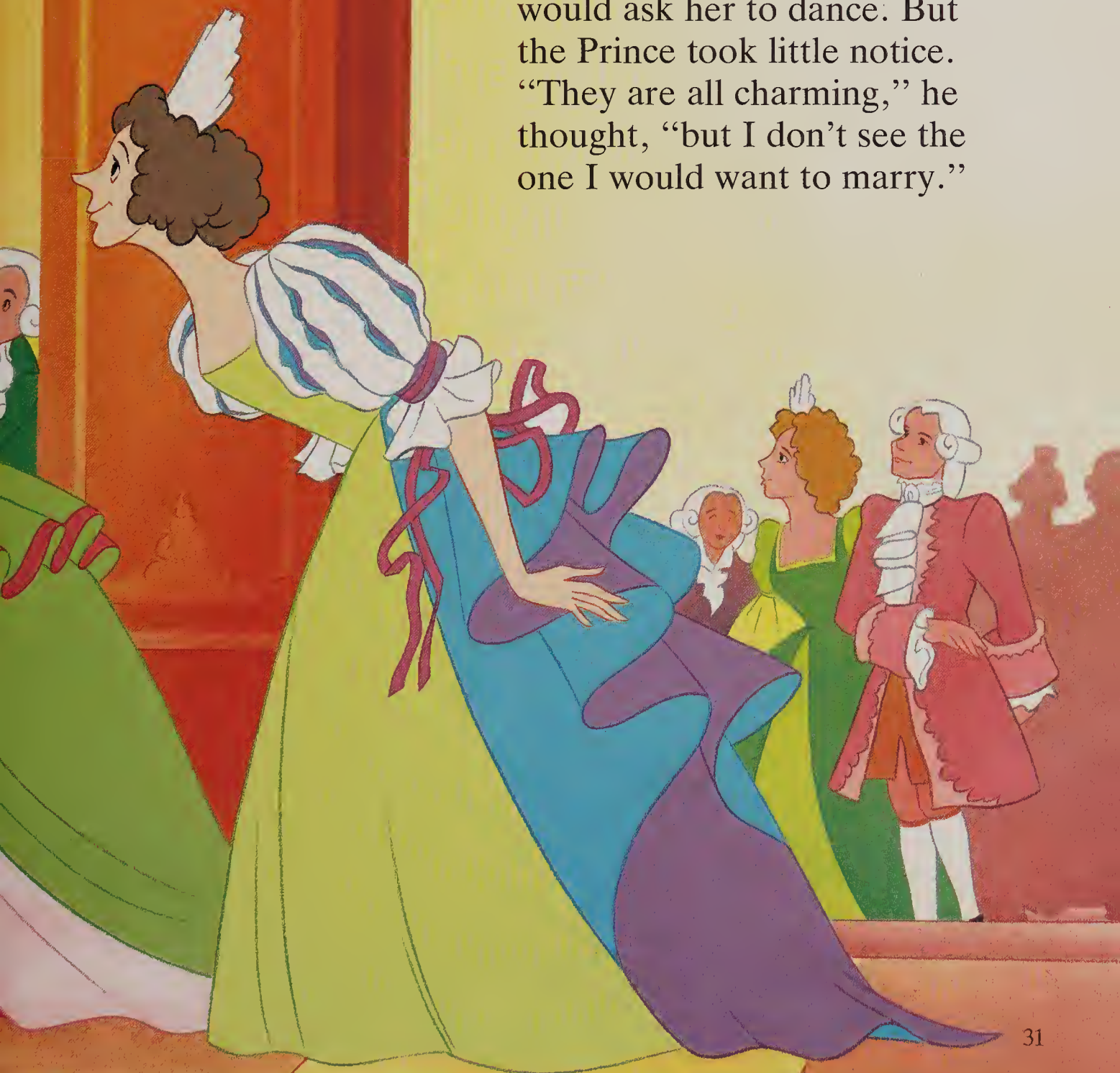
“Thank you!” cried Cinderella joyfully.

Her godmother smiled in approval. “Now have a good time,” she said. “But remember, you must leave the palace before midnight, when the spell will be broken.”





Meanwhile at the palace,
the guests danced and made
merry. It was a splendid
party. Each guest made her
way to the Prince, hoping he
would ask her to dance. But
the Prince took little notice.
“They are all charming,” he
thought, “but I don’t see the
one I would want to marry.”



The Prince was outside getting some fresh air when Cinderella's coach rolled through the palace gates. The Prince and the guests who were outside gasped when Cinderella emerged from the coach. Her beauty seemed pure and captivating.





The Prince himself held out his arm, and escorted Cinderella into the ballroom. He gazed at her as they made their way up the steps. "She could be the one I've been looking for," he thought excitedly.

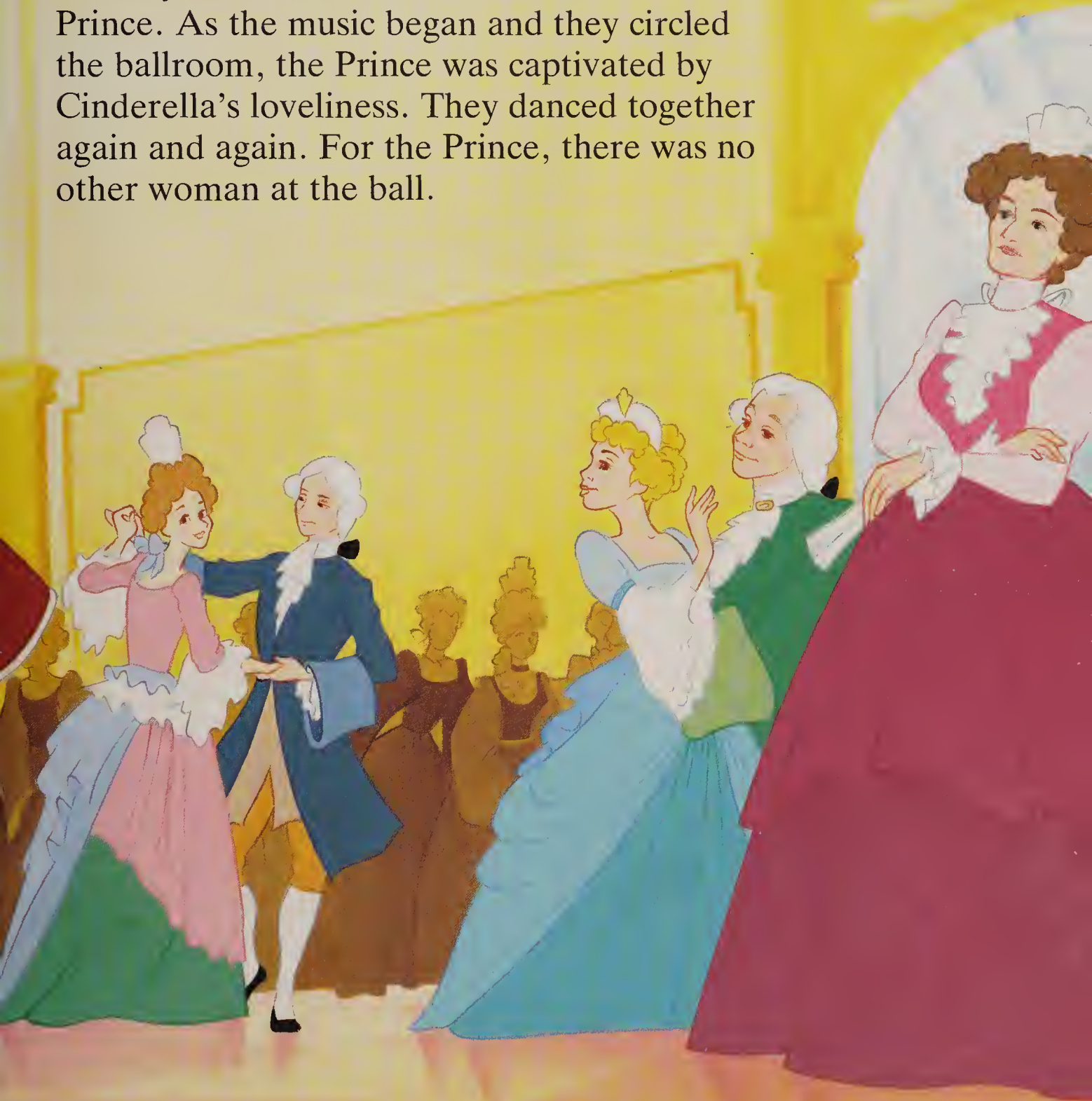






So great was Cinderella's beauty that the whole ballroom fell silent when she entered with the Prince. Cinderella gazed around the room in wonder and delight.

"May I have this dance?" asked the Prince. As the music began and they circled the ballroom, the Prince was captivated by Cinderella's loveliness. They danced together again and again. For the Prince, there was no other woman at the ball.





At last, the Prince said, "Please, tell me your name and where you live." But just then, the palace clock began to sound the hour.

“What time is it?” asked Cinderella breathlessly.

“Just midnight,” replied the Prince.

“I must go!” she cried. And before the bewildered Prince could respond, she ran out onto the terrace to the staircase.



In her haste, Cinderella lost one of her delicate glass slippers on the stairs, but she reached her coach just as the clock chimed midnight.

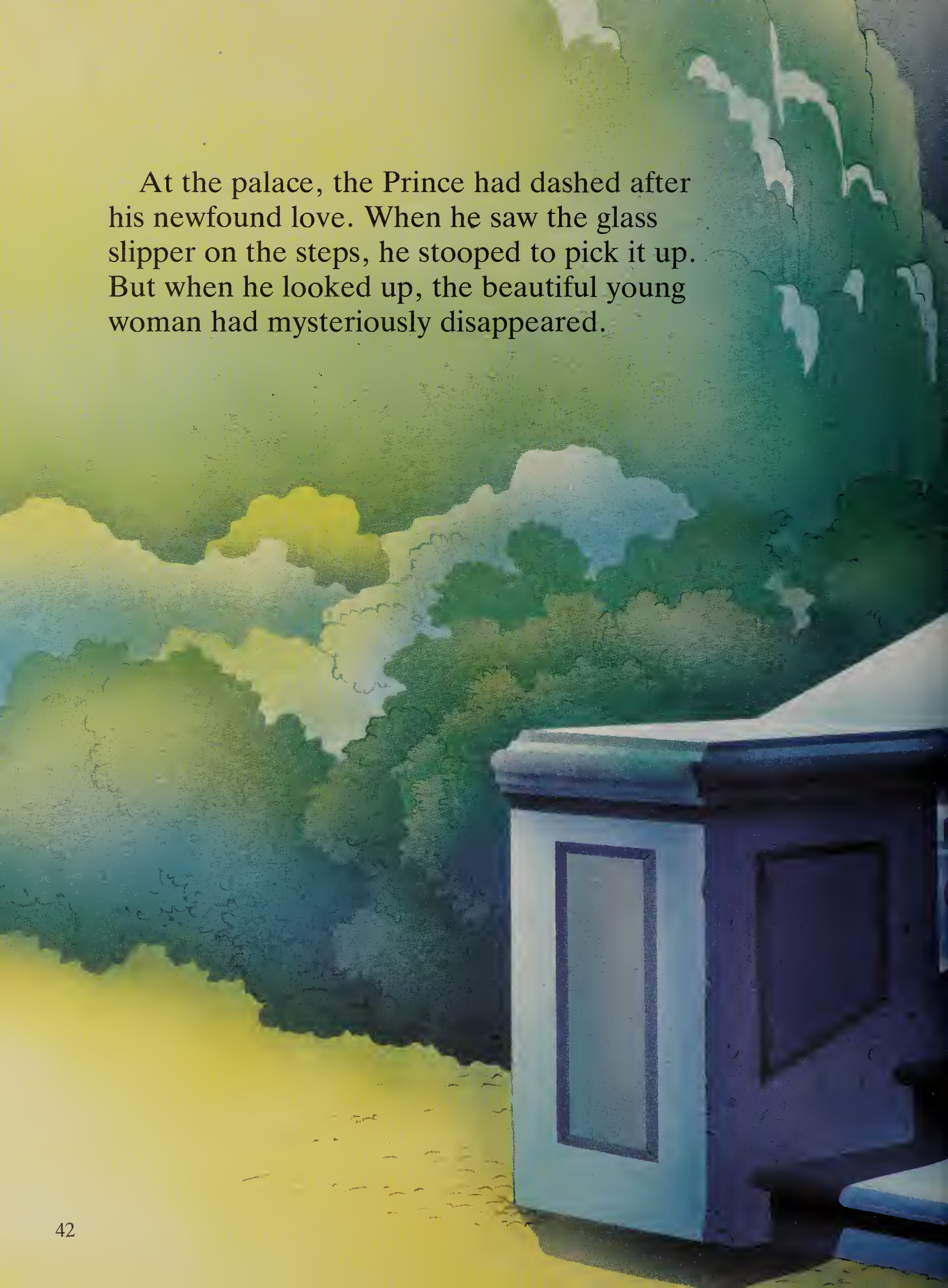


A moment later, the spell was broken. Cinderella found herself at home again, in her threadbare clothes, with the dolls and the pumpkin scattered around her.



She might have thought it was all a dream – except for the single glass slipper on her foot. Shivering with cold, but happier than she had ever been, she took off the slipper and hid it under her mattress. Just then, the doorbell rang shrilly, and she knew her sisters had come home.

At the palace, the Prince had dashed after his newfound love. When he saw the glass slipper on the steps, he stooped to pick it up. But when he looked up, the beautiful young woman had mysteriously disappeared.







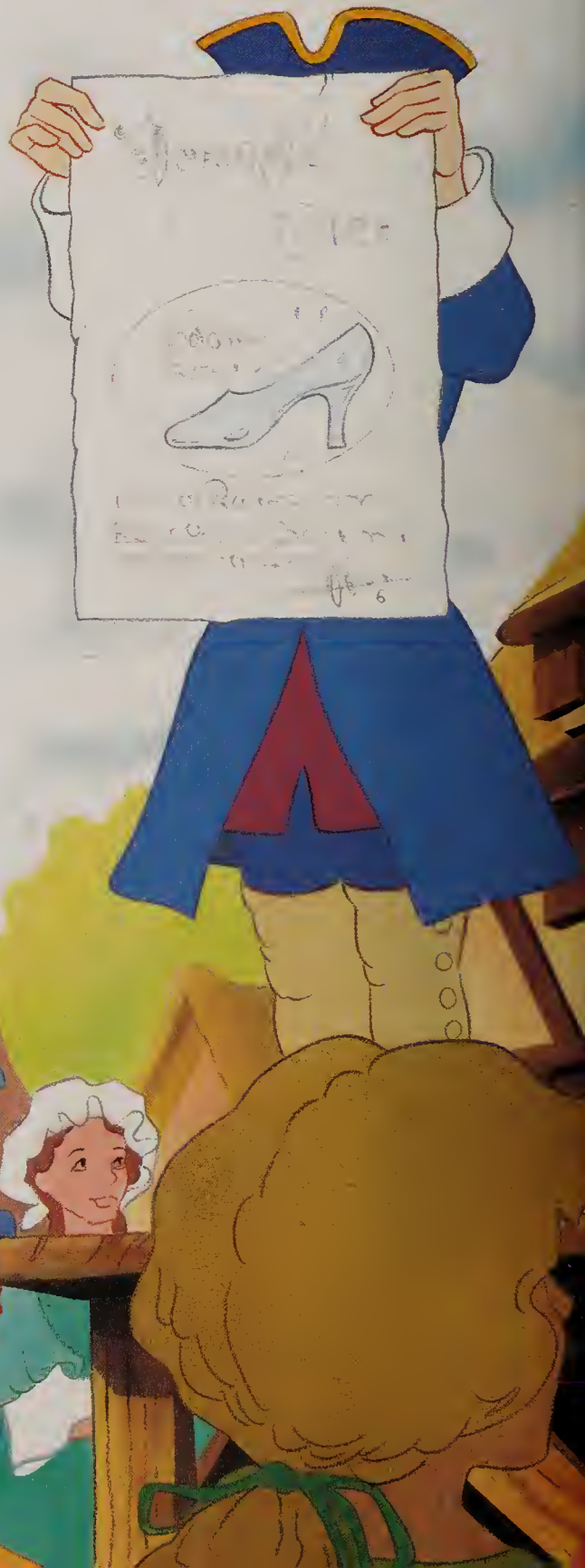
Back at home Cinderella opened the door for her sisters. They swept past her into the room.

“It’s a pity you couldn’t come to the ball,” said the older sister cruelly. “Such music! Such food! And the Prince looked so handsome. I think he fancied me.”

Patently, Cinderella helped them out of their fine clothes and saw them to bed.



The next morning, the royal herald returned to the town square. "Hear ye, hear ye!" he announced, with a flourish of trumpets. "His royal Highness the Prince seeks news of the beautiful guest who lost her glass slipper at the ball last night. All women are invited to try on the glass slipper. The Prince will marry the one who fits into it!"







Soon the town square was crowded with hopeful maidens, all eager to try on the glass slipper. One after another they tried the slipper, but no-one's foot was small enough to fit into it. The King's messengers began to fret.





Cinderella's sisters waited their turn. The eldest plopped into the chair. When the royal herald tried the slipper on her large foot, then shook his head, she grew impatient.

"Let me try!" she said sharply, trying to force the slipper on.

The large crowd that had gathered began to laugh at her foolish vanity.



Just as the royal messengers were about to give up, they heard a little voice asking, "Could I try too?"



A hush fell over the crowd as they watched the girl in rags make her way to the platform. "And to think she could have gone to the royal ball," came an unkind whisper from the crowd.

As the herald tried the slipper on Cinderella's foot, his frown quickly changed into a smile. The slipper fit perfectly!

Cinderella pulled the other glass slipper from her apron pocket just as the Prince arrived at the square.



The Prince recognized Cinderella despite her ragged clothes.

“Why did you run away?” he asked. “I’ve been so worried. I thought I’d lost you forever.”

But before Cinderella could reply, her fairy godmother arrived in a twinkling, and waved her magic wand. Cinderella’s clothes changed into a beautiful dress fit for a princess.





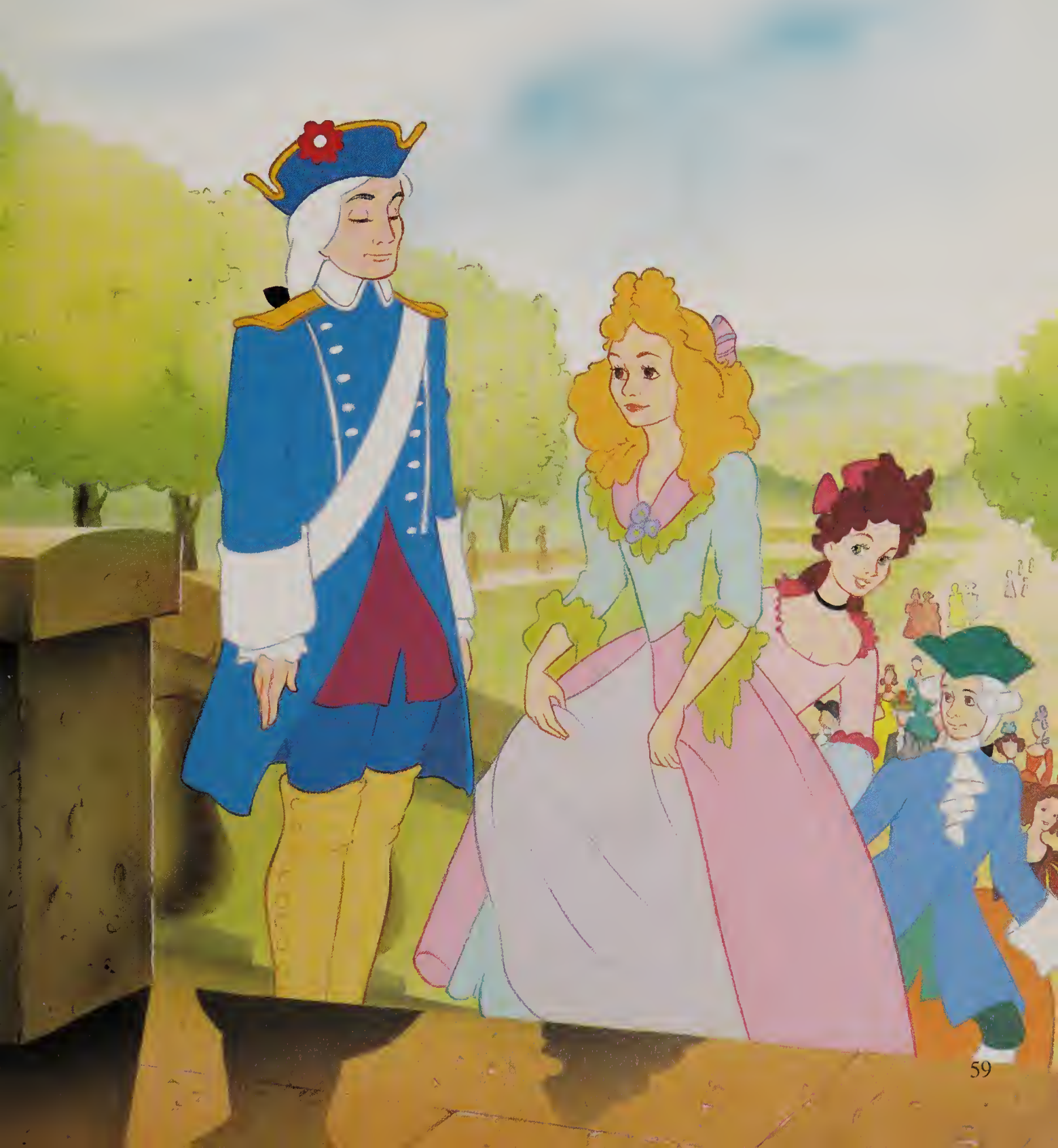
The king and queen received Cinderella like a long-lost daughter, and by nightfall, she and the prince were engaged to be married. Her sisters put aside their jealousy and wished her well – so that they could be frequent visitors at the palace! But Cinderella's nature was so forgiving that she never held their former cruelty against them. In fact, they soon forgot it themselves!



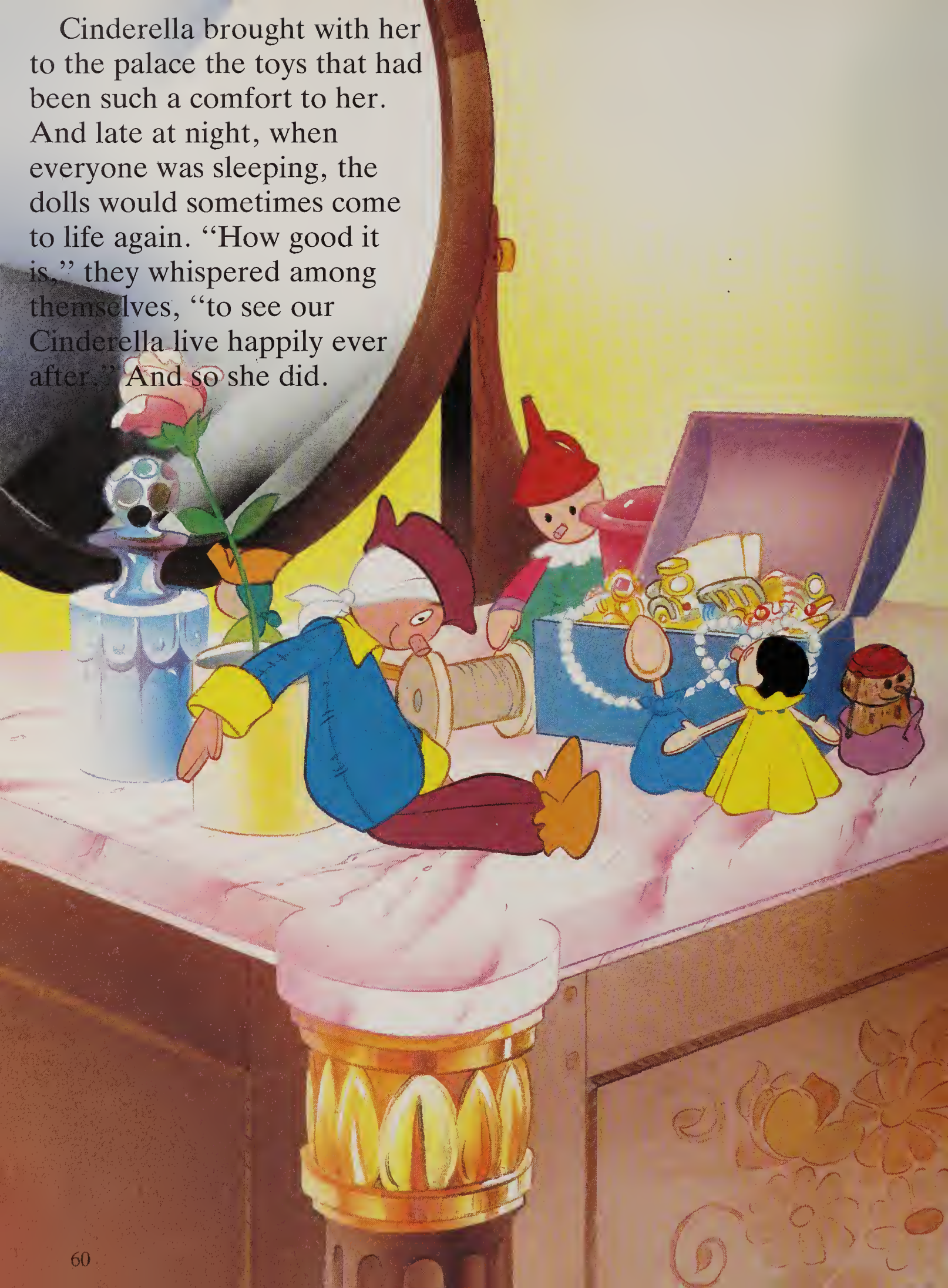




The whole kingdom rejoiced at the royal wedding where it was plain for all to see that the Prince and his new Princess were deeply in love. Nobles, merchants, and peasants alike came to wish the young couple happiness. Silently, Cinderella thanked her fairy godmother, who had smiled on her in both poverty and prosperity. She knew that they would meet again.



Cinderella brought with her to the palace the toys that had been such a comfort to her. And late at night, when everyone was sleeping, the dolls would sometimes come to life again. "How good it is," they whispered among themselves, "to see our Cinderella live happily ever after." And so she did.



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